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(54) **A packaged product**

(57) The present invention relates to a packaged product comprising a package having a liquid reservoir (2) for containing a product, preferably a cleaning product, and a means for delivering the product in a labour efficient way and in a uniform manner. This is achieved by a packaged product in which the means for delivering the liquid comprises an electrically driven pump (5), and further comprises a spray arm (20), the spray arm (20) having at least one dispensing opening (25). The spray arm being either extended or extendible.

According to a second aspect of this invention a new use is achieved in which a cleaning product is applied to carpets and other floor coverings using a device comprising an electrically driven pump (5).

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Description

Field of the invention

[0001] The present invention relates to a packaged product for the delivery of products, preferably cleaning products comprising a surfactant, and to the use of the packaged product.

Background of the invention

[0002] Trigger spray devices are known for the purposes of domestic cleaning, for example for cleaning hard surfaces such as windows, baths and ovens, as well as for spot cleaning of floor coverings such as carpets. Most trigger spray devices which are commercially available are manually activated, that is to say that the devices comprise a trigger which is activated by hand by the consumer. Most commonly this manual activation generates liquid pressure in a chamber by means of a positive displacement pump by means of a positive displacement pump which in turn drives the liquid from the chamber usually through a dispensing nozzle. Many dispensing patterns are possible, but a conical spray is the most common.

[0003] Large surfaces, such as carpets and other floor coverings are, however, difficult to treat with a hand activated trigger spray device. The large surface area demands repeated manual activation of the device many times. This is laborious, and usually results in an uneven application of product over the whole of the surface.

[0004] An electrically activated sprayer is known from US-A-3 993 250, issued on November 23, 1976, however there is no suggestion that this sprayer could be used for the purpose of cleaning surfaces such as carpets. Furthermore while this sprayer could take some of the laborious work out of the task when compared to manually activated trigger sprayers, it still does not fully address the problem of uneven application of product over the whole surface of the carpet or floor covering.

[0005] An extended arm is known from US-A-3 904 116, issued on September 9, 1975. This device is taught principally for use with the application of insecticides.

[0006] The object of the invention is firstly to provide a packaged product comprising a package having a liquid reservoir for containing a product, preferably a cleaning product, and a means for delivering the product in a labour efficient way and in a uniform manner. A further object of the invention is to provide a new use for the packaged product.

Summary of the Invention

[0007] According to the first aspect of this invention this object is achieved by a packaged product in which the means for delivering the liquid comprises an electri-

cally driven pump, and further comprises a spray arm, the spray arm being either extended or extendible and having at least one dispensing opening so that in operation, the product is pumped by the electrically driven pump from the liquid reservoir, through the spray arm, to the product dispensing opening from which it is dispensed. It is further preferred that the spray arm communicates with the liquid reservoir by means of a flexible connector.

[0008] According to the second aspect of this invention a new use is achieved in which a product, preferably a cleaning product is applied using a device comprising an electrically driven pump.

Brief Description of the Drawings

[0009]

- Figure 1 shows a diagrammatic representation of a device having an extendible spray arm.
- Figure 2a shows a diagrammatic representation of a device which is an alternative embodiment of the invention. This embodiment has a pump mounted on the reservoir.
- Figure 2b shows a diagrammatic representation of a device which is an alternative embodiment of the invention. This embodiment has a pump mounted on the spray arm.
- Figure 3 shows a diagrammatic representation of a device which is an alternative embodiment of the invention.
- Figure 4 shows the liquid-applying spray arm with tubing coiled outside the telescopically extendible wand, said spray arm being in the extended configuration.
- Figure 5 shows the liquid-applying spray arm with tubing coiled outside the telescopically extendible wand, said spray arm being in the collapsed configuration.
- Figures 6 A-B-C shows the anti-dripping system with umbrella valve.
- Figures 7 A-B shows the anti-dripping system with cone and spring elements, respectively in closed and open positions.
- Figures 8 A-B-C shows the flow-control means with cylinder system, respectively in open, reduced-flow, and closed positions.
- Figure 8 D shows the cylinder in place in its housing with rubber joints for leaktightness positioned on the sides, and the flow-control rotating button.

Detailed Description of the Invention

[0010] It is an essential feature of the packaged product of the present invention that it comprises an electrically driven pump. The electrically driven pump is used to pump product from the reservoir through the spraying arm and out of the product dispensing opening (or

openings) located in the spraying arm. In this way the product can be applied to the surface to be treated. The product dispensing openings are preferably nozzles which are selected so that the sprayed product takes the form of a continuous stream or film, or of a discontinuous stream or film of fine particles, or of a mist, or of a foam. It is most preferred that the spray pattern is in the form of fine particles because this is the most efficient way to cover a large surface area with a small volume of product with an even coverage. In particular the spray pattern may be a flat spray, taking the form of a triangle with its apex at the nozzle, or it may take the form of a conical spray, again with its apex at the nozzle. The spray can be created, for example, by an impingement type of nozzle, or by using spinner technology, or an oscillating fluid circuit. Other embodiments include a foaming nozzle or a deflection nozzle. Typically the product output is from about 20 ml/minute to about 400 ml/minute, and preferably from about 150 ml/minute to about 250 ml/minute, the product being typically suitable for carpet cleaning. The packaged product of the present invention is to be used for example for spraying household cleaning or laundry products, or perfumes. In a preferred embodiment, the packaged product is a cleaning solution used for the cleaning of surfaces such as fabrics, carpets, floors, and ceilings.

[0011] It is preferred that the spray arm has one nozzle, but it may also have multiple nozzles located along its length. The spray arm makes it easier to control where the cleaning product is sprayed. For example, when cleaning carpets the spray arm makes it easier to avoid spraying product onto furniture and walls, and also enables access into corners which would otherwise be difficult to reach. Furthermore, an ergonomically designed spray arm avoids the need for the user to have a bent back when spraying.

[0012] The electrically driven pump may be, for example, a gear pump, an impeller pump, a piston pump, a screw pump, a peristaltic pump, a diaphragm pump, or any other miniature pump. In the preferred embodiment the pump is a gear pump with a typical speed between 6000 and 12000 rpm.

[0013] The electrically driven pump must be driven by a means such as an electric motor. The electric motor typically produces a torque between 1 and 20 mN.m. The electric motor must, in turn be provided with a power source. The power source may be either mains electricity (optionally via transformer), or it may be a throw-away battery, or rechargeable battery. Most preferred are one or more AA rechargeable or disposable batteries, the batteries being housed in the package. The voltage output of the battery is typically between 1.5 and 12 Volts, with a preferred output between 3 and 6V.

[0014] The packaged product according to the present invention is preferably hand-held, and therefore preferably comprises a holding means. The holding means may be any sort of handle which will allow the user to

pick up the packaged product and to carry it to the place where the spraying is to be carried out. The handle can be part of the container or of the implement housing. It is likely that the packaged product will be carried around a whole room when a carpet is being cleaned. The handle may be a simple protrusion or indentation which may be gripped by the user, or it may be a more sophisticated design for ergonomic reasons.

[0015] The spray arm, or extendible elongated liquid-applying device, may be rigidly extended. However such a spray arm can be difficult to store, and the spray arm is preferably extendible either by means of telescopic or foldable configuration. A telescopic configuration can be a liquid tight telescopic mechanism, or can have a tube running inside. A preferred embodiment is hereafter described in detail.

[0016] The extendible spray arm (220) comprises a handle (231), to which is connected a telescopically extendible wand (232) of the spray arm, and a dispensing tube (233) which is movably attached to said spray arm (220). Preferably, the spray arm (220) further comprises a dispensing nozzle, which is more preferably a spraying nozzle (230).

[0017] The length of the telescopically extendible wand (232) is reduced to less than 15 cm, preferably less than 10 cm, more preferably less than 7 cm, when it is in collapsed configuration, while said telescopically extendible wand (232) can be extended to more than 50 cm, preferably more than 70 cm when the spray arm (220) is in its fully extended configuration. At the same time, the external and greatest diameter of the spray arm (220) does not exceed 5 cm, preferably not more than 3.5 cm.

[0018] The spray arm (220) firstly comprises a handle (231), as shown in figures 1 and 2, which is the most proximal element of said spray arm (220), i.e. the element which is the closest from the user during use. It has an elongate shape, and can be made out of any suitable material such as plastic, metal, alloy, cork, or a combination of several materials, but preferably, the external surface of the handle (231) is coated with an anti-slip, rubber-like material. In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the handle (231) comprises a hollow portion (234) inside which the dispensing tube (233) is positioned. This hollow portion (234) is a cylindrical channel whose diameter is slightly superior to the external diameter of the dispensing tube (233). This channel is more preferably located along the great length of the handle (231). Preferably, the handle's length is less than 20 cm, more preferably less than 15 cm.

Once the dispensing tube (233) of the spray arm (220) is connected to the source of liquid, the spray arm (220) can be detached from said source of liquid before use, or alternatively, it can stay attached to said source of liquid, for example, it can be used while integrated to said source's main body.

[0019] The handle (231) comprises a recess into

which at least one portion (235) of the telescopingly extendible wand (232) is located when the spray arm (220) is in its collapsed configuration, as shown in figure 2. Preferably, the length of the telescopingly extendible wand's portion which is protruding from the handle (231), when said telescopingly extendible wand (232) is in full collapsed position, i.e. the portion which is not arranged within said handle (231), is less than 50%, preferably less than 25%, of the total length of said telescopingly extendible wand (232) in collapsed position. In this way, while the user benefits from the complete length of the telescopingly extendible wand (232), i.e. the substantially combined length of all segments of said telescopingly extendible wand (232), she/he can benefit from a collapsed spray arm (220) with a very short length.

[0020] Optionally, and while the spray arm (220) is framed such as to be as light as possible, the handle (231) comprises a counterweight which is either a separate element which is releasably connected, for example clipped or screwed, to said handle (231), or which is integrated to said handle (231). Said counterweight may be useful in case the weight of the device's distal end increases, for example when in extended position, and/or during use when the dispensing tube (233) is filled with liquid.

[0021] Optionally, the spray arm (220) further comprises a means (236) for controlling the flow of liquid which is dispensed through the nozzle member (10). Preferably, the flow-control means (236) is integrated to the handle (231), however, it can also be integrated to the main body of the liquid dispenser, for example to the main body of an electrical sprayer.

[0022] In a first embodiment of the present invention, the flow-control means (236) has the shape of a turning piston (237) which is pierced by a channel (238) through which the liquid is free to flow. The turning piston (237) is rotatably inserted into a cylinder (239), as shown in figures 5 A to 5 D. The flow-controlling means (236) is further provided with rings (240) for leak-tightness which are made for example out of a natural or synthetic rubber-based material, or Teflon[®]. The cylinder (239) is connected to the dispensing tube (233), such that when the channel (238) of the turning piston (237) is aligned with the tube, the flow-control means (236) is in its full dispensing position. When the user turns the piston into the cylinder (239), the flow of liquid is reduced, or even completely stopped when the channel (238) is substantially perpendicular to the alignment of the dispensing tube (233).

[0023] In a second embodiment of the present invention, the flow-control means (236) is a cam-like rotating element which position is modified by action on an associated button. It is located on the outside of the dispensing tube (233), while said dispensing tube (233) is made of an elastically deformable material. Such a construction does not require to interrupt the continuity of the dispensing tube (233), thus improving the leak-tight-

ness of the system. The cam-like element is a substantially oval rotating roller which comprises a central rotating axis disposed perpendicular to the direction of the dispensing tube (233). When the longitudinal direction of the cam is substantially parallel to the direction of the dispensing tube (233), the liquid is free to flow through the dispensing tube (233). As soon as the user turns the button, the longitudinal direction of the cam-like element is substantially perpendicular to the direction of the dispensing tube (233), then the dispensing tube (233) is compressed and closed such as to stop the liquid flow.

[0024] The telescopingly extendible wand (232) of the spray arm (220) comprises a series of at least two tubular members (241) movably connected one to the others. For clarity purposes in the following description, it is defined that the spray arm (220) is oriented and comprises a proximal end, near the handle (231), and a distal end to which the liquid product is dispensed. The tubular members (241) can have any shape which allows to connect them so as to build a rod-like extension which can be extended or collapsed by sliding one member relatively to the preceding one. Any material may be used which provide enough resistance to flexion, while being as light as possible. Such suitable materials include for example thermoplastic resins, metals, alloys, wood fiber, carbon fiber, or a blend of these. In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the tubular members (241) are made out of metal.

[0025] Each tubular member (241) is telescopingly engaged with and slideable along the adjacent tubular members. Preferably, each tubular member (241) is shaped such as to be free to slide inside the preceding tubular member, and such that the following tubular member is free to slide into. However, the tubular members (241) can be "positionally reversed" such that each tubular member slides along the outside of the preceding tubular member. Sliding one tubular member inward or outward with respect to the adjacent tubular members retracts or extends the telescopingly extendible wand (232) of the spray arm (220) for storage or for cleaning and to meet particular work needs.

[0026] For some tasks, the user must be able to use the spray arm (220) in intermediate lengths. For that purpose, the number of tubular members (241) is preferably more than three, more preferably more than five. In a first embodiment of the present invention, the tubular member's diameter and profile are so adjusted that, while one member is free to slide relatively to the adjacent ones, the friction coefficient between two connected members requires a certain strength to make them slide and they are not free to slide only with their own weight. Rather, the user must apply a certain strength to make them slide, and once they are set in a determined length, the friction is enough to maintain this position during use or transportation. Suitable values for the friction coefficient and suitable profile and diameter for the tubular members will be chosen adequately by

those skilled in the art.

[0027] At last, in any of the preceding embodiments of the present invention, at least one portion of the proximal segment of the telescopically extendible wand (232) of the spray arm (220) is designed to fit inside the handle (231) when the spray arm (220) is in the collapsed configuration. Preferably, the length of the telescopically extendible wand's portion which is protruding from the handle (231), when said telescopically extendible wand (232) is in full collapsed position, i.e. the portion which is not arranged within said handle (231), is less than 50%, preferably less than 25%, of the total length of said telescopically extendible wand (232) in collapsed position.

[0028] The last tubular member (243), i.e. the tubular member which is the nearest from the distal end of the spray arm (220), has a distal end with one or more, preferably one nozzle member (10) secured at such end, said nozzle member being constructed as hereabove described. Optionally, the nozzle member is detachable and can be replaced by another nozzle member for which the spray pattern is different. This allows the user to selectively chose the spray pattern relatively to the surface to clean. In this case, the nozzle member is secured onto the distal tubular member of the spray arm's telescopically extendible wand (232) by screwing, clipping or any other releasable means.

[0029] Optionally, the spraying nozzle (230) is mounted to the telescopically extendible wand's distal segment (243) by a rotary attaching means, for example a ball/socket joint, so that said spraying nozzle (230) can be manually oriented by the user to facilitate access to surfaces to whom the access is difficult.

[0030] In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the spray arm (220) is provided with an anti-dripping valve (244). At the time the user stops feeding the dispensing tube (233) with liquid, for example by stopping the pump of an electrical sprayer, there is still liquid in the tube. As a result, the liquid which remains in the tube is very likely to be spilled when the user moves the spray arm (220), or when the user collapses the telescopically extendible wand (232) to arrange the spray arm (220). Such spillage is clearly undesirable, and it is prevented by the use of the anti-dripping valve (244). Said valve is preferably located in the distal portion of the spray arm (220), more preferably connected between the dispensing tube (233) and the nozzle member. Several antidripping valve (244) constructions may be applied in the present invention.

[0031] In a first embodiment, the anti-dripping valve (244) is an umbrella (245) valve, as shown in figures 3 A and 3 B, which is integrated into a channel and secured in place by a portion (246) of the channel which has a restricted diameter. As shown in figure 3 B, the central portion of the valve comprises liquid channels (247) through which the liquid is free to flow. As shown in figure 3 C, the umbrella (245) portion of the valve is curved and flexible, and so positioned that it normally contacts

the walls of the channel. As a result, the liquid has to deform said flexible umbrella (245) portion to flow. Such deformation can be achieved for example by pumping the liquid from the container of an electrical sprayer, however, as soon as the pump is stopped, the liquid charge inside the dispensing tube (233) is not sufficient to deform the umbrella (245), the valve closes back, and the liquid flow is stopped.

[0032] In a second embodiment of the present invention and as shown in figures 4 A and 4 B, the valve comprises a rigid housing (248), which comprises a hollow portion with a conic wall (249). Inside the housing is also a movable cone (250), and a spring element (251) which elastically presses the cone against the conic wall (249) of the housing such as to create a liquid-tight and releasable seal. The cone is positioned so as to face the liquid flow. When the liquid charge inside the dispensing tube (233) is sufficient, for example, when the liquid is pumped from the container of an electrical sprayer, the movable cone (250) is pushed by the liquid and passes through the valve up to the nozzle member of the spray arm (220). As soon as the liquid charge inside the tube is not sufficient, for example when the pump of the electrical sprayer is stopped, the cone is pressed back against the conic wall (249) of the housing by the spring, and the liquid flow is stopped.

[0033] The spray arm (220) further comprises a dispensing tube (233) which conducts the liquid to dispense from a source, for example the container or bottle of an electrical sprayer, up to the nozzle member of the spray arm (220) to which it is connected in a liquid flow communication. The dispensing tube (233) is attached in at least one point to the spray arm (220). It can be of any suitable material such as for example a thermoplastic resin, natural or synthetic rubber, a metal or an alloy, or a combination of the preceding materials. Preferably, the dispensing tube (233) extends unbroken along the length of the spray arm (220), from the proximal end to the distal end. More preferably, said dispensing tube (233) is unbroken from the source of liquid, up to the nozzle member, as shown in figure 2. Such arrangement provides an effective cleaning solution discharge from the nozzle member regardless of relative positions of the tubular members one to the other, while providing the user with a leak-tight liquid applying spray arm (220).

[0034] In a first and preferred embodiment of the present invention, the dispensing tube (233) is attached inside the handle (231) as shown in figure 2, said dispensing tube (233) then comprises a coiled portion which is coiled outside the telescopically extendible wand (232) of the spray arm (220). Preferably, said coiled portion comprises at least 10 coils (252). The distal portion of the tube is connected to the nozzle member (10) through a liquid-tight connection. The liquid flow is substantially the same in collapsed, extended or intermediate positions of the spray arm (220).

[0035] In a second embodiment of the invention, the dispensing tube (233) is linear and preferably made out

of a non-extendible thermoplastic material. It is connected to the source of liquid, by its proximal end. Said dispensing tube (233) is further connected to the spray arm (220) by fish-rod like attachments, preferably in at least one point of each tubular member, as shown in figure 9. Alternatively, the dispensing tube (233) can be attached only to the source of liquid, to the handle (231) of the spray arm (220), and then to the nozzle member, but without or only partial link to the telescopically extendible wand (232) of the spray arm (220). Partial link means that the tube is attached in one or two points only to the extendible portion of the spray arm (220). Such fish-rod like attachments comprise for example annular rings (240) made out of metal, plastic or a combination of those, through which the tube is free to slide when the spray arm (220) is extended or retracted. The distal end of the tube is connected in a leak-tight way to the nozzle member of the spray arm (220). In a third embodiment of the present invention, the dispensing tube (233) is linear and made out of a rubber-like material, preferably silicone rubber. This material gives the tube enough flexibility, so that when the spray arm (220) is extended, the dispensing tube (233) elastically extends as well, but its diameter stays substantially the same. As a result, the liquid flow through the nozzle member remains substantially the same when the spray arm (220) is in collapsed, extended, or intermediate position.

[0036] From the foregoing, it will be appreciated that the quantity of relatively heavy cleaning solution confined within the relatively small diameter dispensing tube (233) is reduced. Furthermore, the materials which are chosen for making the different elements of the spray arm (220) are light. As a result, the weight of the spray arm (220) is thereby minimized and said spray arm (220) is very easy and less-tiring to manipulate, even over long periods of time, especially when handled by women. Preferably the weight of the spray arm is less than 200 g, more preferably less than 150 g.

[0037] The liquid reservoir is preferably provided with a venting means in order to allow air into the reservoir as the product is pumped out. Venting can be obtained through, for example, one way valve, venting membrane, or mechanically or electrically operated valve. Alternatively the product may be contained within a flexible bag within the liquid reservoir, so that the flexible bag collapses as the product is pumped out. The liquid reservoir is also preferably provided with a means to be releasably engaged with the pump/motor assembly. This means that when the reservoir is empty it can be removed from the pump/motor assembly and either discarded or refilled. The full liquid reservoir can then be reconnected to the pump/motor assembly for further use.

[0038] In a preferred embodiment of this invention, the liquid reservoir is a fluid filled bottle which is provided with a vent and fluid transfer fitment that allows the contents of the bottle to be vented while being transferred

without the contents spilling when the bottle is inverted. Referring to Figures 9 and 10, the preferred vent and fluid transfer fitment (310) comprises a transfer fitment (311) having a transfer check valve (312) and a venting check valve (313) and is shown in an unassembled (figure 9) and an assembled (Figure 10) configuration. The transfer fitment (311) is preferably a single molded part that contains both the transfer check valve (312) and the venting check valve (313) (Figures 9a - 9b). However, the fitment (311) may include a cap or closure (314) in which a separate transfer check valve (312) and venting check valve (313) are inserted (Figure 9c) without deviating from the intent of the invention.

[0039] In addition, the preferred transfer fitment (311) may have support ribs (315) which add stability to the transfer fitment (311) and particularly to the transfer check valve (312) as shown in Figures 9a and 9b. The transfer check valve (312) and the venting check valve (313) are preferably duckbill valves which have an inherent sealing pressure and which are oriented in the same direction. However, the valves (312) and (313) may comprise a variety of valves without deviating from the intent of the invention. For example, the check valves (312) and (313) may comprise umbrella valves, ball and spring check valves or a slit valve. In addition, the venting check valve (313) may be located elsewhere on the bottle (2) and/or in a different orientation without deviating from the intent of the invention.

[0040] The preferred transfer duckbill valve (312) has an open end (312 a) and a closed "beak" end (312 b) which remains in a closed position when the transfer duckbill valve (312) is in the relaxed state (Figure 9a). The preferred venting duckbill valve (313) also has an open end (313 a) and a closed "beak" end (313 b) which remains in a closed position when the venting duckbill valve (312) is in the relaxed state (Figure 9a).

[0041] The preferred fitment (311) is attached to a fluid filled bottle (2), specifically an opening (317), by snapping a snap bead (318) of the fitment (311) into a snap rim (319) of the bottle (2). However, the fitment (311) may be attached to the bottle (2) using screw threads (320) on a bottle finish (321) as is well known in the art. After attaching the preferred fitment (311) to the bottle (2), said bottle may be inverted without allowing the contents of the fluid within the bottle (2) to exit due to the valves (312) and (313) being in the relaxed state as seen in Figure 9a and the ends (312 b) and (313 b) remaining closed.

[0042] The preferred fitment (311) and bottle (2) assembly is connected to a receiver attachment (322) which has a probe tip (323) and an air vent groove (324). The probe tip (323) has a first and second open end (323 a) and (323 b), respectively. The first open end (323 a) of the probe tip (323) deforms and opens the "beak" end (312 b) of the transfer duckbill valve (312) upon insertion into the open end (312 a) (Figure 10). The second open end (323 b) of the probe (323) is preferably connected to a tube (233) for guiding the fluid

from the bottle (2) to a pump or reservoir (not shown). However, the tube (233) and receiver attachment (322) may be formed as a single piece without deviating from the intent of the invention.

[0043] When the bottle (2) is in an inverted orientation (Figure 9a), the internal static pressure acting against the "beak" end (312 b) and (313 b) of the duckbill valves (312) and (313), respectively, will seal the valves (312) and (313) tightly. Therefore, the valves (312) and (313) prevent fluid from prematurely flowing out of the inverted bottle (2) until the probe (323) of the receiver attachment (322) is inserted within the transfer duckbill valve (312)

[0044] Upon insertion of the receiver attachment's probe (323) into the transfer duckbill valve (312), the fluid is transferred by gravity through the probe tip (323) as it deforms and opens the transfer duckbill valve (312). As a result, a vacuum (sub-atmospheric) pressure is created within the bottle (2). When the vacuum is sufficient to overcome the sealing pressure on the venting valve (313), a bubble of air will be drawn into the bottle (2) along an air flow path (326) (Figure 10) which quickly relieves the vacuum pressure created within the bottle (2) by the fluid exiting and resumes the sealing pressure. Preferably, the sealing pressure of the venting duckbill valve (313) is less than the sealing pressure of the transfer duckbill valve (312). As a result, the vacuum (sub-atmospheric) pressure created within the bottle (2) will cause the venting duckbill valve (313) to open and not the transfer duckbill valve (312) beyond the opening created by the displacement of the valve (312) due to the probe (323). The air vent groove (324) in the receiver attachment (322) ensures that air can reach the venting duckbill valve (313) and be drawn into the bottle (2) when sufficient sub-atmospheric pressure is generated by the transfer of the fluid from the bottle (2). As the probe tip (323) is pushed through the transfer duckbill valve (312) (Figure 10), the probe (323) seals along the inside wall of the duckbill valve (312). In the fully seated position (Figure 10), the probe (323) extends through the open end (312 a) of the duckbill valve (312) and provides a fluid path to the tube (233).

[0045] The switch can be any suitable and ergonomic design to be operated usually by fingers or thumb. The switch can be provided with child safety features.

[0046] The products useful in the present invention are preferably cleaning products and more preferably cleaning products comprising a surfactant. However, they can also comprise for example laundry or cleaning products, or perfumes, as well as compositions comprising deodorizing ingredients such as cyclodextrins and substituted cyclodextrins. Such deodorizing compositions are disclosed for example in EP 0 774 978; EP 0 776 220; EP 0 774 980 and EP 0 775 229, all of the preceding patent applications/patents have been filed by the Procter & Gamble Company.

[0047] In the preferred embodiment in which the product is a cleaning composition, the most useful compo-

nents include surfactant; builders; bleach and bleach activators; enzymes and enzyme stabilizers; soil release agents, chelating agents; antiredeposition agents; aqueous or non aqueous dispersing agents; brightener; suds suppressor; dye transfer inhibiting agents.

[0048] Non-limiting examples of surfactants useful herein typically at levels from about 1% to about 55%, by weight, include the conventional C₁₁-C₁₈ alkyl benzene sulfonates ("LAS") and primary, branched-chain and random C₁₀-C₂₀ alkyl sulfates ("AS"), the C₁₀-C₁₈ secondary (2,3) alkyl sulfates of the formula CH₃(CH₂)_x(CHOSO₃M⁺) CH₃ and CH₃(CH₂)_y(CHOSO₃M⁺) CH₂CH₃ where x and (y + 1) are integers of at least about 7, preferably at least about 9, and M is a water-solubilizing cation, especially sodium, unsaturated sulfates such as oleyl sulfate, the C₁₀-C₁₈ alkyl alkoxy sulfates ("AE_xS"; especially EO 1-7 ethoxy sulfates), C₁₀-C₁₈ alkyl alkoxy carboxylates (especially the EO 1-5 ethoxycarboxylates), the C₁₀-C₁₈ glycerol ethers, the C₁₀-C₁₈ alkyl polyglycosides and their corresponding sulfated polyglycosides, and C₁₂-C₁₈ alpha-sulfonated fatty acid esters. If desired, the conventional nonionic and amphoteric surfactants such as the C₁₂-C₁₈ alkyl ethoxylates ("AE") including the so-called narrow peaked alkyl ethoxylates and C₆-C₁₂ alkyl phenol alkoxyates (especially ethoxylates and mixed ethoxy/propoxy), C₁₂-C₁₈ betaines and sulfobetaines ("sultaines"), C₁₀-C₁₈ amine oxides, and the like, can also be included in the overall compositions. The C₁₀-C₁₈ N-alkyl polyhydroxy fatty acid amides can also be used. Typical examples include the C₁₂-C₁₈ N-methylglucamides. See WO 9,206,154. Other sugar-derived surfactants include the N-alkoxy polyhydroxy fatty acid amides, such as C₁₀-C₁₈ N-(3-methoxypropyl) glucamide. The N-propyl through N-hexyl C₁₂-C₁₈ glucamides can be used for low sudsing. C₁₀-C₂₀ conventional soaps may also be used. If high sudsing is desired, the branched-chain C₁₀-C₁₆ soaps may be used. Mixtures of anionic and nonionic surfactants are especially useful. Other conventional useful surfactants are listed in standard texts.

[0049] Figure 1 shows a diagrammatic representation of a device (1) comprising a liquid reservoir. The reservoir is a conventional bottle (2) with a handle (3). The device further comprises a unit (4) which is mounted on top of the bottle (2) and which contains the electrically driven pump (5), an electrical motor (6), and a rechargeable battery (7). An electrical circuit (not illustrated) is completed by means of a switch (8) in order to operate the motor (6) and drive the pump (5). Figure 1 also shows a recharging socket (9). The inlet side of the pump is connected to a dip tube (10) which extends within the bottle (2) in order to remove product under vacuum from within the bottle when the pump (5) is operating. The outlet side of the pump is connected to an extendible spray arm (20) which comprises two pieces (21, 22). The two pieces are slidably connected

(23) so that the spray arm can be extended to its maximum length. Figure 1 also shows an anti-dripping valve (244) and a nozzle (230) mounted at the free end of the spray arm. By free end it is meant the end which is not connected to the pump.

[0050] Figure 2a shows a diagrammatic representation of a device (1) comprising a liquid reservoir. The reservoir is a conventional bottle (2). The device further comprises a unit (4) which is mounted on top of the bottle (2) and which contains the electrically driven pump (5), an electrical motor (6), and a rechargeable battery (7). An electrical circuit (not illustrated) is completed by means of a switch (8) in order to operate the motor (6) and drive the pump (5). Figure 2 also shows a recharging socket (9). The inlet side of the pump is connected to a dip tube (10) which extends within the bottle (2) in order to remove product under vacuum from within the bottle when the pump (5) is operating. The outlet side of the pump is connected to a flexible spray arm (120) which comprises a flexible portion (233) and a rigid portion (122). Figure 2 also shows an anti-dripping valve (244) and a nozzle (230) mounted at the free end of the spray arm.

[0051] Figure 2b shows a diagrammatic representation of a device (1) which is similar to the device shown in figure 2a. However in figure 2b the unit (4) is not mounted directly on to the bottle (2). The flexible portion (233) is connected to the inlet side of the electrically driven pump (5). The dip tube (10) is formed by the free end of the flexible portion.

[0052] Figure 3 shows a diagrammatic representation of a preferred embodiment of the device (1) which can be used with either one hand, or with two hands. The device is shown in cut-away cross-section. The device comprises a liquid reservoir which is a conventional bottle (9) from which liquid is pumped by an electrical pump/motor (5, 6) through a dispensing tube (233) to a spray arm (220). The spray arm (220) is of the preferred type as herebefore described, which comprises a handle (231), a flexible dispensing tube (233) coiled outside a telescopically extendible wand (232), said telescopically extendible wand (232) being partially arranged within the handle (231) when said spray arm (220) is collapsed. The housing (204) also comprises a battery (7) and a switch (8). The spray arm can be attached to the housing of the device (for example by a clipping mechanism) or can be detached from the body of the device, the device being held in one hand, and the spray arm being held in the other hand. The housing (204) is designed so that the bottle (9) is inverted when the device is held by the handle (3) for use. The advantages of this configuration are that no dip tube is required, and fully emptying the bottle is easier. Furthermore, the short distance from the liquid to the pump inlet will allow fast priming of the pump (5) when it is unprimed.

Claims

1. A packaged product for the delivery of products, preferably cleaning products comprising a surfactant, the packaged product comprising a liquid reservoir (2) for containing a product and a means for delivering the product, the means comprising an electrically driven pump (5), and characterized in that the means further comprises a spray arm (220), the spray arm (220) being either extended or extendible, and comprising at least one product dispensing opening (230), so that in operation, the product is pumped by the electrically driven pump (5) from the liquid reservoir (2), through the spray arm (220), to the product dispensing opening (230) from which it is dispensed.
2. A packaged product according to claim 1 wherein the packaged product further comprises a holding means (3), and wherein the distance from the centre of the holding means (3) to the furthest product dispensing opening (230) is at least 0.2 metres, preferably at least 0.4 metres.
3. A packaged product according to either of claims 1 or 2 wherein the spray arm (220) communicates with the liquid reservoir (2) by means of a flexible connector (121, 233).
4. A packaged product according to claim 1 wherein the electrically driven pump (5) is provided with an electrical power source, the source comprises at least one electrical battery (7), the battery being housed in the package.
5. A packaged product according to claim 4 wherein the battery (7) is rechargeable.
6. A packaged product according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the spray arm comprises a handle (231), a telescopically extendible wand (232) connected to said handle (231), and a dispensing tubing (233) attached outside said extendible wand (232), at least one portion of the telescopically extendible wand (232) being arranged inside the handle (231), when the compact spray arm (220) is in the collapsed position.
7. A packaged product according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the liquid reservoir (2) is releasably connected to the pump (5) through a liquid-tight vent and fluid transfer fitment (310), said fitment (310) comprising (a) a transfer check valve (312) for allowing passage of liquid from the reservoir (2) to the pump, and (b) a transfer venting valve (313) for allowing air to displace the liquid when said liquid exits said reservoir (2), both valves (312, 313) having an inherent sealing pressure created

by the static pressure of the liquid within the container.

8. Use of a hand-held device comprising a liquid reservoir (2) for containing a cleaning product for the purpose of cleaning carpets and other floor coverings characterized in that the device comprises an electrically driven pump (5), the use comprising the steps of pumping the product by means of the electrically driven pump (5) from the liquid reservoir (2) to a product dispensing opening (230) from which it is dispensed. 5 10
9. Use of a hand-held device according to claim 8 wherein the device further comprises a spray arm (220), the spray arm (220) being either extended or extendible, and comprising at least one product dispensing opening (230). 15
10. Use of a hand-held device according to claim 8 wherein the device comprises a holding means (3), and wherein the distance from the centre of the holding means (3) to the furthest product dispensing opening (230) is at least 0.2 metres, preferably at least 0.4 metres. 20 25
11. Use of a hand-held device according to either of claims 9 or 10 wherein the spray arm communicates with the liquid reservoir (2) by means of a flexible connector (121, 233). 30

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Fig. 1

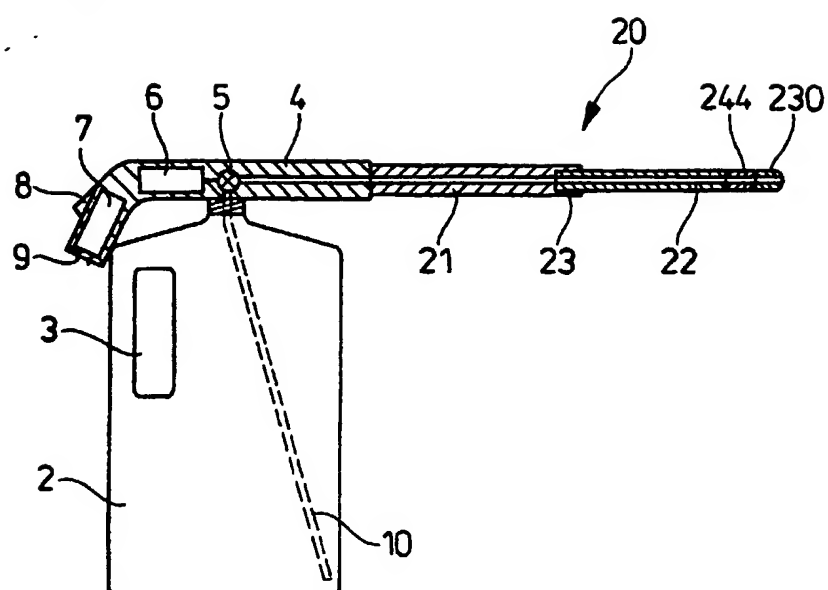


Fig. 2a

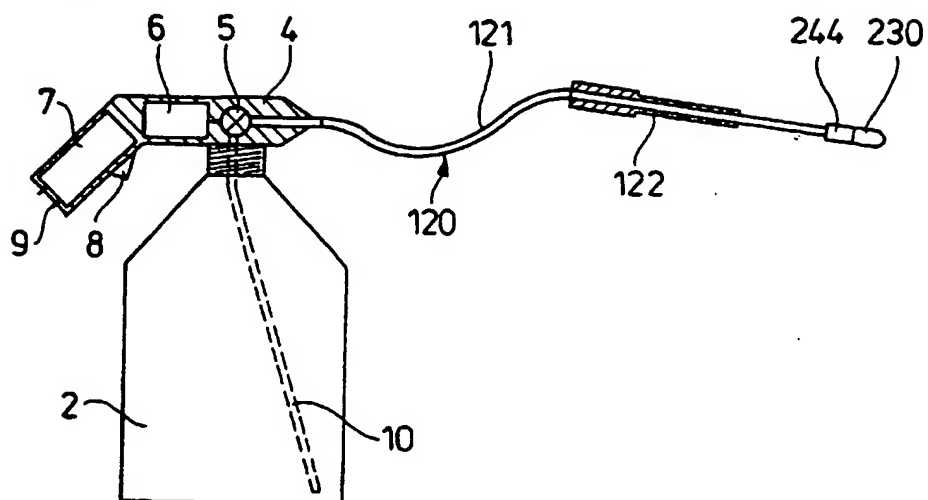


Fig. 2b

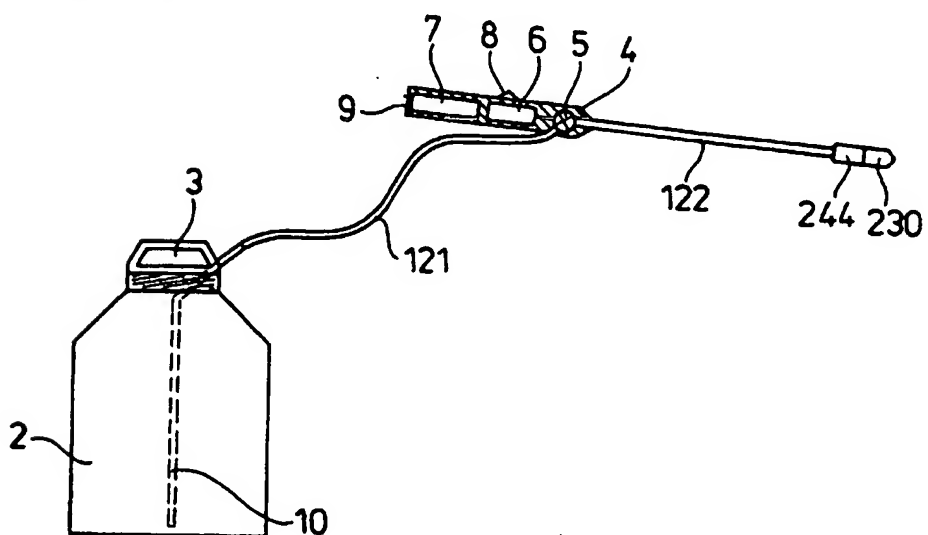


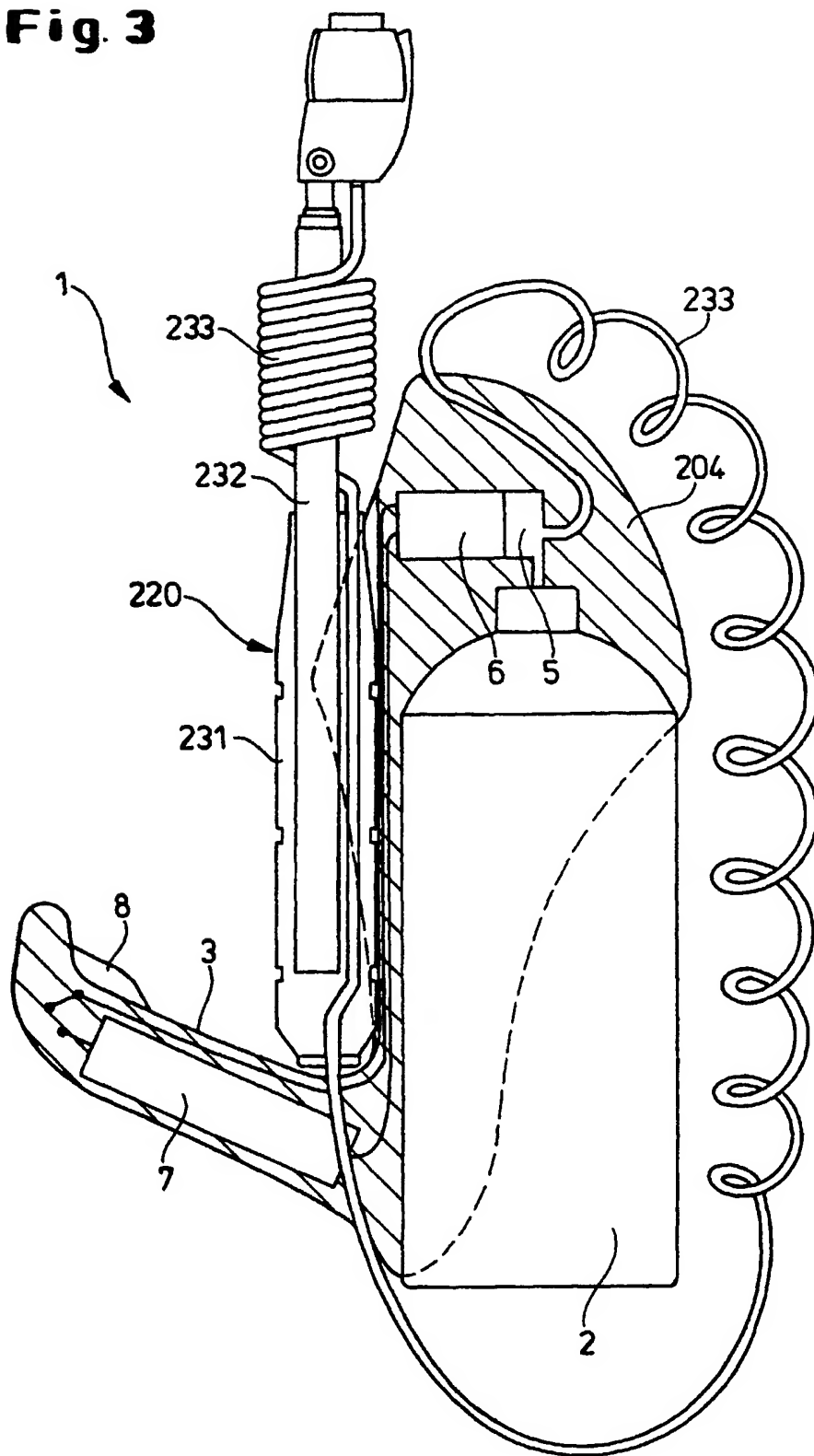
Fig. 3

Fig. 4

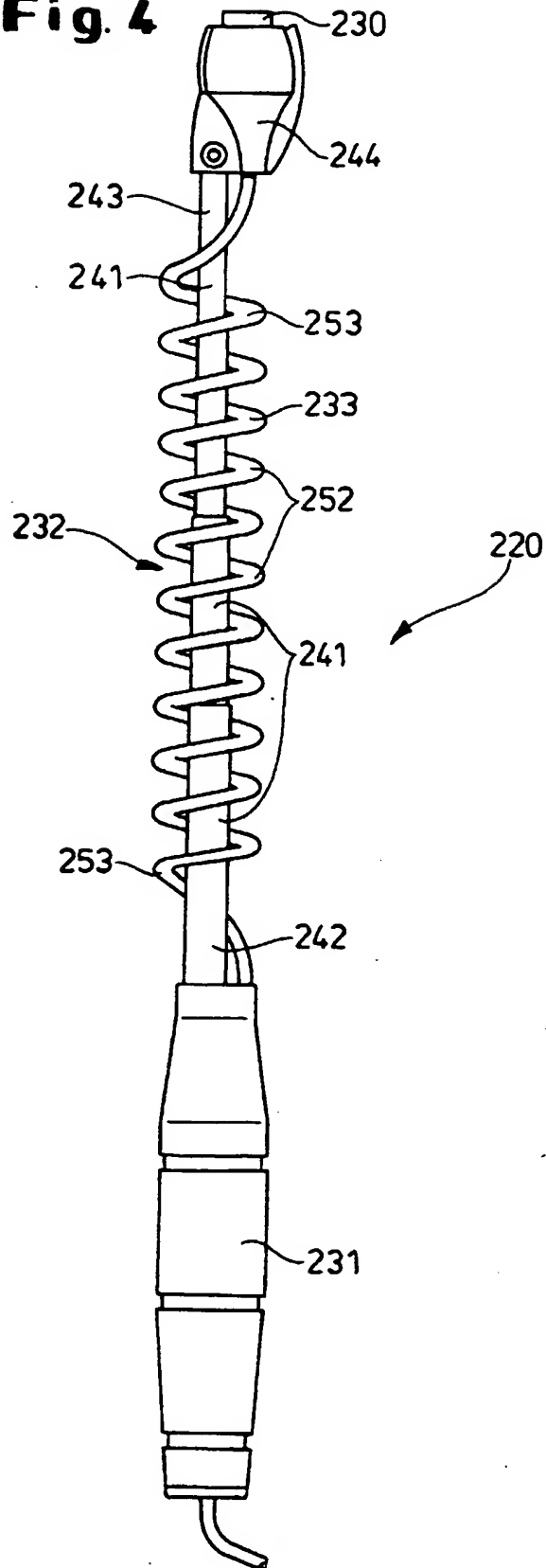


Fig. 5

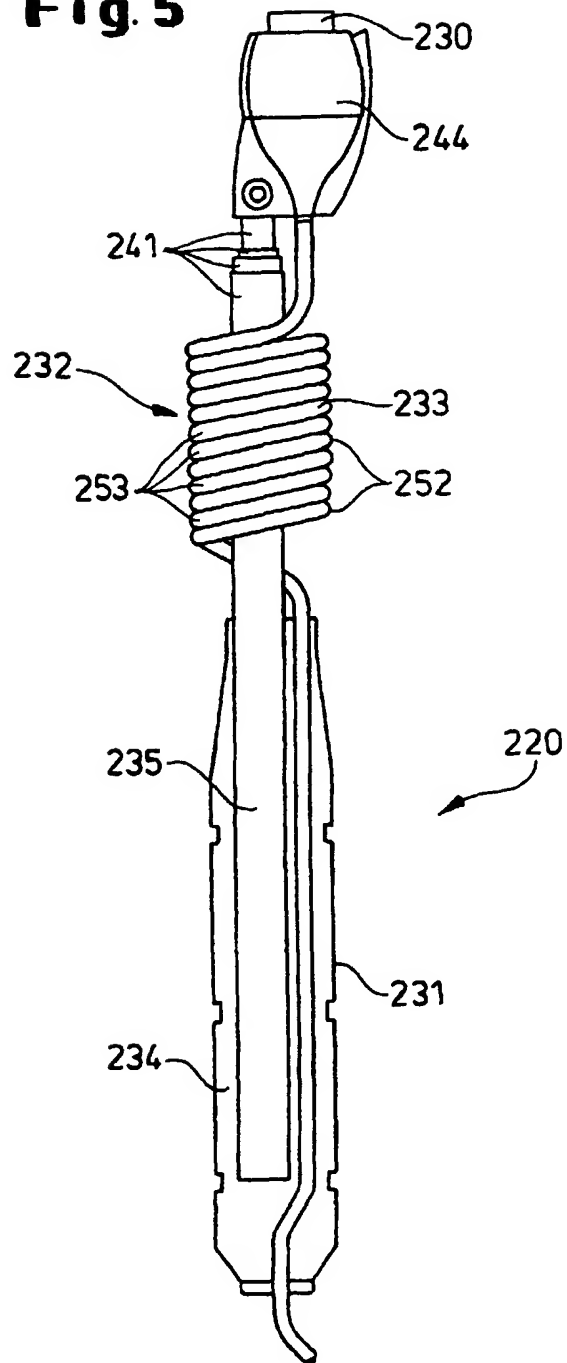


Fig. 6A

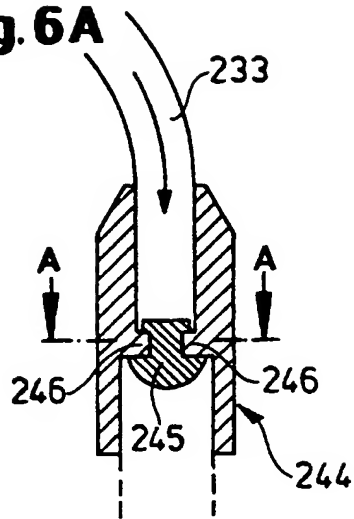


Fig. 6B A - A

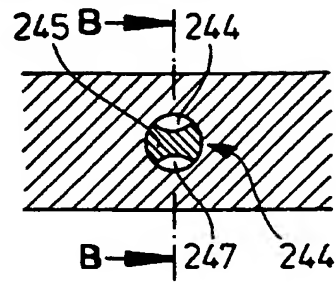


Fig. 6C B - B

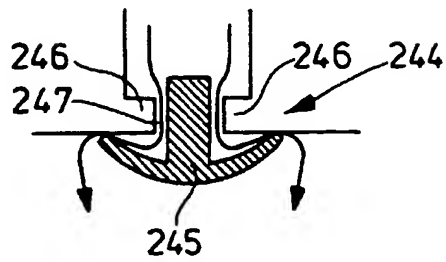


Fig. 7A

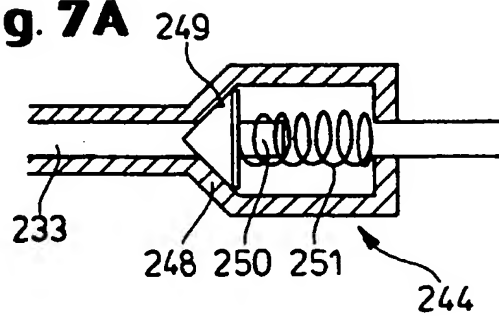


Fig. 7B

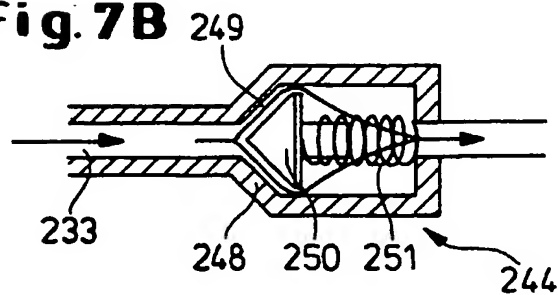


Fig. 8A

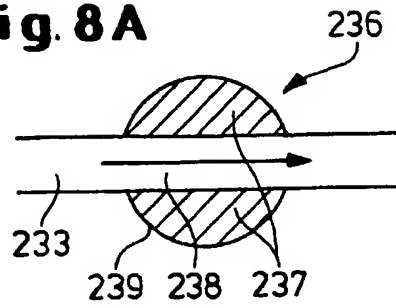


Fig. 8B

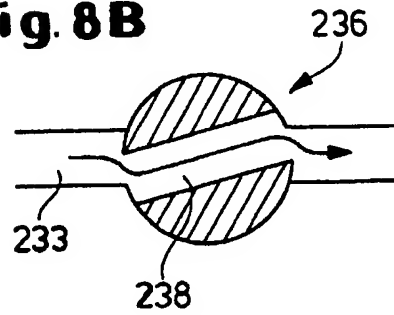


Fig. 8C

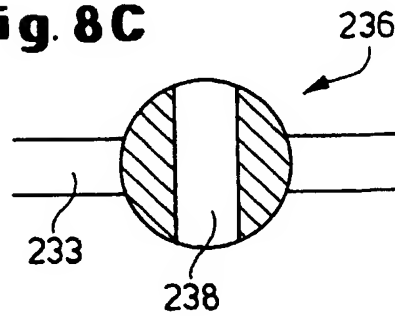


Fig. 8D

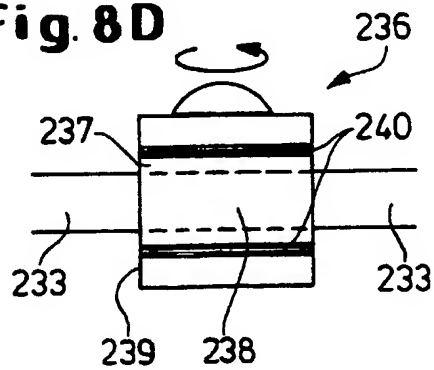


Fig. 9A

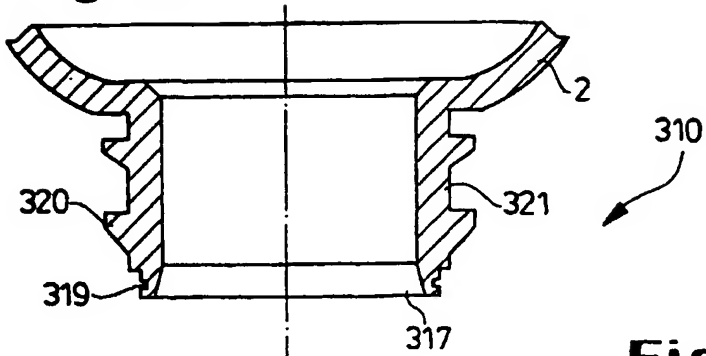


Fig. 9B

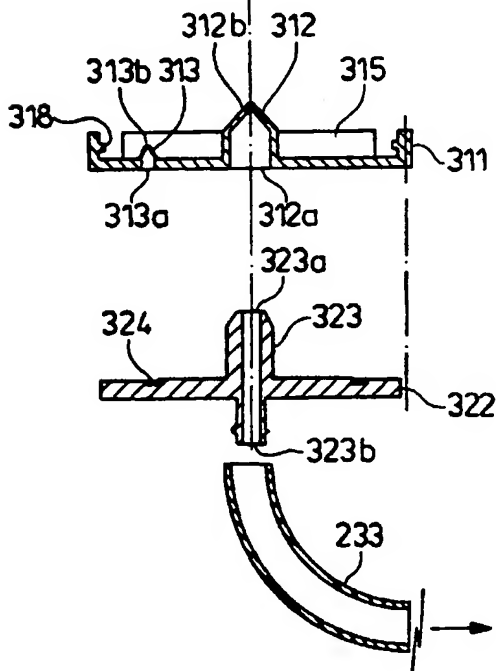
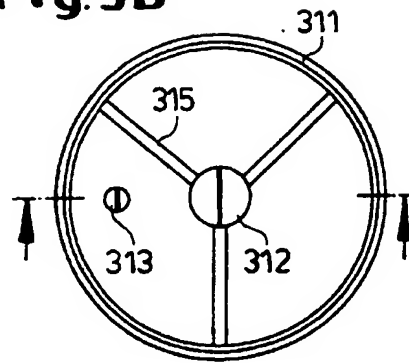


Fig. 9C

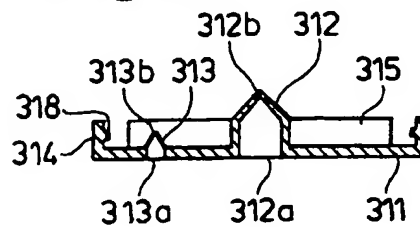
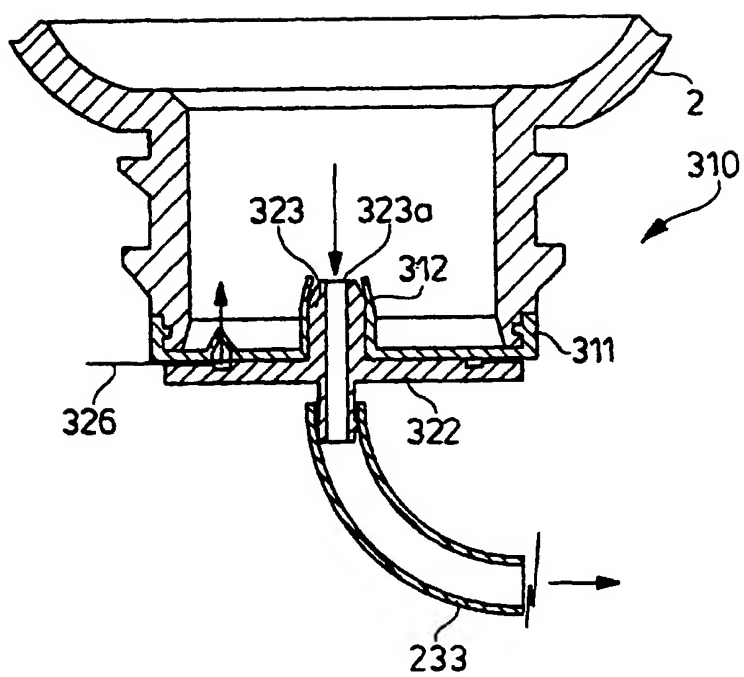


Fig. 10



European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 98 87 0243

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Y	* abstract * * page 5, line 24 - page 6, line 11 * * page 10, last paragraph - page 11, last line; figures 1,3,6 *	6,7	
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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6) B06B B05B A47L
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 15 June 1999	Examiner Guastavino, L
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